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The methods of Michelet and of M. Vidal de la Blache were contrasted in the beginning of this review. They are also to be compared. Michelet's style may be the more captivating and the play of his imagination be ever a rapture to his reader, but M. Vidal de la Blache writes in an alluring way, and at times is eloquent and poetic. The description of the west coast of Normandy (p. 326) is an etching in words.

This volume is the ripe fruit of thirty years of study. Karl Ritter's letters and even the English *Consular Reports* have been quarried for knowledge. Some time ago the reviewer picked up a little pamphlet by M. Vidal de la Blache, a lecture delivered at the opening of the course in history and geography at the University of Nancy. It is interesting to compare it with the present work. Reading it in the light of this volume, one feels the little brochure to be a prophecy and a promise now so admirably fulfilled. It is a pity, however, that some such work as Himly's book upon the territorial formation of Germany might not conclude this series of volumes, as the one now under review inaugurates the series. From the nature of his subject M. Vidal de la Blache cannot enlarge upon the historical geography of France. He only suggests the lines of development. All the information of a geographo-political nature now scattered throughout the whole requires to be compressed and crystallized into a volume which shall portray the territorial formation of France; the formation of the feudal provinces; the influence of the Seine and the Loire, as bearers of commerce, as boundaries, and as factors in the time of war, as notably the case with the Loire in the sixteenth century. The history of the "natural frontiers" of France is one yet imperfectly written, although M. Sorel is the author of a brief but excellent account (*Révolution Française*, I. 254 ff.). There are sixty-four maps or diagrams scattered through the book, which do much to illuminate the text. It is to be regretted, however, that the maps have not been printed on paper of a harder and smoother surface than the ordinary book-paper. For the large general map alone is proper paper used. As a consequence it is the only one which is clear. The others appear blurred, and fine details are impossible.

JAMES WESTFALL THOMPSON.

Histoire de France depuis les Origines jusqu'à la Révolution. (Publiée sous la Direction de M. Ernest Lavisse.) Tome II., 1. Le Christianisme, les Barbares, Mérovingiens et Carolingiens. Par C. BAYET, G. PFISTER, et A. KLEINCLAUSZ. (Paris: Hachette et Cie. 1903. Pp. 439.)

THE second volume of the *Histoire de France* is not up to the standard of some other volumes of the series. First of all, it lacks the unity of most of the others, for it is of triple authorship. M. Bayet writes of the evangelization of Gaul, of the manners and customs of the early Germans, of the history of the Visigoths and Burgundians, and of the Franks down to the death of Clovis, besides contributing a chapter upon

the intellectual influence of the church M. Pfister has covered the Merovingian period down to 714, and written the chapters upon the later Carolingians and the origins of the feudal régime; to M. Kleinclausz has been allotted the task of writing the history of the Carolingians from 714 to 888.

M. Bayet is scholarly and has great grace of style, but he has a tendency to be too positive on doubtful matters. On page 3 he assumes that St. Paul visited Gaul; whereas that Paul visited Spain between his first and second imprisonments is only conjectured; it has the element of probability, but the burden of historical opinion regards the supposed visit to Gaul as apocryphal. Again, did Irenæus recognize the primacy of the bishop of Rome (p. 9)? And in view of the fifteen drastic ordinances of the emperor Theodosius against heretical and pagan worshipers, and the appropriation of pagan property for Christian purposes, it seems an exaggerated distinction to write that "Le christianisme n'est pas encore une religion d'État, mais il est la religion des empereurs qui, de tout leur pouvoir, en favorisent les progrès." The chapter on "Le Monde Germanique" is a skilful presentation of the salient institutions of the Germanic people — skilful because of the clever avoidance of the angles of argument. The controversialist will probably find much to complain of, but the average reader will be inclined to accept the statements at their face-value. German scholarship is the author's reliance in this writing, and Coulanges is entirely repudiated (p. 56, note).

M. Pfister excels in institutional history; the chapter upon the origins of feudalism is a capital piece of writing. The same may be said of that upon the institutions of the Merovingian epoch. But the rest of Book II., covering the Frank period from the death of Clovis to Charles Martel, is disappointing. There is too much mere narrative. Moreover, in his account M. Pfister divorces the facts from the institutions that shaped them, and this makes his interpretation of the civil wars of the sixth and seventh centuries unsatisfactory. His view is that the wars were provoked by the ambition of the Frank kings. The real principle at stake was whether the crown or the nobles should be predominant, but the nobles were the aggressors. The author fails to distinguish between cause and occasion. The war between Sigbert and Chilperic to revenge the murder of the Neustrian queen was taken advantage of by the *leudes*, to rebel against the kingship which had grown too strong for German — and feudal — ideas during the heroic era. As he exaggerates the ambition of the kings as a factor in the struggle, so also he overestimates the personal worth of Dagobert I. in the interim between the civil wars. The king reigned, but the nobles governed in the person of Pepin of Landen. The very failure of Dagobert's attempt to recover from the nobles, and even from the church, a portion of those lands of which the crown had been despoiled in the course of the wars, is evidence of this. Dagobert recoiled before the powerful opposition of the nobles and clerical resistance. The eulogy of him on page 161 hardly agrees with critical history to-day. Owing to this failure to

interpret Frankish history institutionally, the author fails to gage the significance of Grimoald's attempted usurpation in 656. The weight of tradition and the sanction of the church were back of the Merovingian dynasty. The act stirred the latent loyalty of the Franks, and such forces, though impalpable, are not to be ignored. There is a tardy recognition (p. 273) of the influence of this "divinity that doth hedge a king," but the point there made could not have been appreciated by the mass of the Frank nation, and was capable of advantages with legists and churchmen only.

This personal interpretation of history is carried on through the history of the Carolingians, written by M. Kleinclausz. Fortunately, the forceful character of Charlemagne makes such a manner of treatment seem juster than it would otherwise be. Book III., Chapter 2, upon Charlemagne as emperor, and especially the sixth portion, upon the coronation of 800, is as lucid as Bryce, while being much fuller. Sickel's article in the *Historische Zeitschrift* for 1900, LXXXIV. 385, "Kirchenstaat und Carolinger," ought to be inserted in the bibliography of this event. The same praise is to be awarded the paragraphs upon Charlemagne's partition of the Empire in 806. The feudal structure of the Frank Empire, and the importance of "peace and concord" as unifying bonds are emphasized. But the minute that Charlemagne has disappeared the defective treatment becomes manifest again. Charlemagne was stronger than institutions and molded them to his will. With the Merovingians and later Carolingians institutions were stronger than the kings. The civil wars of the ninth century are too much ascribed to the weaknesses of Louis the Pious and the ambition of his sons, and not enough to the feudal influences of the time. The only hint of such a condition of things is in two lines upon page 367. The feudal character of the Strasburg Oath is passed over; Verdun is represented too much as a national partition and not as a distribution of fiefs, which fundamentally it was. It is singular that there is no allusion to the synod of Trosly in 909, for few documents of that century cast as great light upon the civilization of that age, and when read in the light of the events of the time the articles are luminous as to feudal and clerical policy. Charles the Simple gets all the credit for the creation of the Norman duchy, neither the influence of the church nor the self-interest of Robert of Paris being recognized. In connection with Normandy, there is a distinct exaggeration on page 404. The Danegeld was not *often* collected after the settlement of the Northmen. There are only two instances — 924 and 926.

JAMES WESTFALL THOMPSON.